

Sex, Blood, Fashion

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Summary

The others don't seem to be listening, the cameraman off to one side and the makeup team too busy putting away their kits to pay attention to the words that George spits. And for that he's thankful, because there's no holding back the dangerous look he shoots in Dream's direction nor the bitterness in his voice.

"I'm saying that if you ever pull a stunt like that again, then I'll skin you alive."

or, george has been a model for years and dream, the new guy, thinks he knows everything

Notes

so this fic is for the amazing [mia](#) i hope you enjoy !! took a small risk with the au type i chose but i hope you like !!!

tysm to [jil](#) and [millie](#) for betaing

as always, if the ccs involved state that they're uncomfortable with these types of works then i won't hesitate to take this down ! enjoy !!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

For as long as George can remember, being a model has been cut-throat.

It's never been easy—there's the expectation to be something he's not, the seemingly innate ability for people to judge no matter how he presents himself, and George is one of those few people that never seemed to grasp onto the fact that going through college while trying to pursue modelling in the real world will never be an easy task.

But George manages.

He learns when to stay quiet, how to take phone calls while making notes in class, and he learns exactly how to shut up and let a director tell him what to do, how he should never question the people in charge because that's just a sure-fire way to never get hired for another gig.

It's not fun, and it's not what George had thought it would be, but after a while it's routine and George can pretend to like it, understand it all.

Which is exactly why this *Dream* guy will never stand a chance.

The cameraman cocks his head to one side, standing over the frame with his eyes narrowed, and George takes the unspoken words with clenched fists, tilting his jaw up while the lines of his lips stay flat. His mouth is bitten, red and painted and the sheer clouds that stain his vision make the whole experience almost tolerable, less painful to get through.

Behind him, Dream doesn't seem to understand the etiquette.

Dream is tall. They love that in models. He's well built, and he's blond, and he has all of the angled features that George can only envy, but the one thing he doesn't have is the brain, the sense to shut the fuck up and take direction for once in his life.

The clothes that George wears are uncomfortable, completely ill-fitting and tied together at the back with a clamp that no camera will see, and even though Dream is wearing the same he doesn't manage to hold the same grace that George does—he's far less illusive.

Every emotion that Dream feels is plastered onto his face. The way his hands shake with nerves, obvious in the way he holds onto himself and tries not to reach for George as well. And it's then that George realises that this industry can't be for everyone, that people like Dream will never understand the poker face that George puts on, because some aren't meant for the camera in the way he is, some will never learn how to deal with the comments and take them in stride rather than getting emotional over the things that don't matter.

“Shit,” Dream mumbles, quiet under his breath in a manner that only George will hear. Somehow even with the shake to his tone he feels optimistic, like the cameraman's ice stare hasn't managed to pierce his hopes just yet.

“Stop moving,” George all-but snaps. Two hands are in his pockets, posture relaxed like he isn't doing everything in his power to keep his face straight.

Behind him, Dream *still* doesn't get it.

That's the problem with newbies, George thinks. They're in far over their heads, believing that a simple smile and a humbled laugh will get them out of every sticky situation they're put in. But that's not the case, George knows that first-hand.

He's seen models be thrown to the side for spraining an ankle on the runway, heard casting directors cursing out his "friends" for even thinking they could get the role when they clearly don't fit the criteria. And yeah, maybe the first time that George was yelled at he was a little shaken too, but George has thick skin and he picked himself straight back up, something that he knows *Dream* won't do.

"I can't work with this," the cameraman mumbles, hands thrown into the air. And George can barely catch the eye of his manager before he's being called away, ripped from the shoot because of everyone's fault but his own.

"What's going on?" George asks.

"Shoots over." George's manager has never been the most talkative man, he's straight to the point and he's domineering, and even if his feelings are completely hidden, George knows that he doesn't like him.

"Why?" George questions. He knows of course. He knows that Dream fucked this up for him—the both of them in fact—but he needs to hear it—watch the poison words drip from another person's throat for his own sick enjoyment. "Will, tell me."

There's a sigh. A moment where George can take a breath before the clamp around his waist is being pulled and someone is ushering him out of the clothes he's only just put on. It's not unusual for him to feel disoriented at the lights and the flashing, but it's all over so quickly that he's barely managing to keep up. Just his own, worn clothes being pushed into his hands for him to drag back on.

"Apparently you guys aren't the right fit," Wilbur mutters, bitter distaste in his tone when he watches the bodies twirl, because that's bullshit, George is the perfect fit for everything. And his eyes seem to settle on the guy, Dream, before flicking back over to George's with meagre odium, a thought in his mind that circles and simmers before he finally speaks the thought. "Blondie is spending more time looking at you than the camera."

"What?" George hisses, angered and boiling, and *god* he didn't think that the newbie would go as far as to try and sabotage him on the job.

"Yeah," Will confirms. "The directors think it's good energy, just not the kind of thing that they're going for."

It's ludicrous, makes George's teeth grit as he breathes dirt through them, and when he turns to one side and sees Dream being pampered by the makeup artists, the only thing that George can feel is rage.

"Well what do they want from us?" He snaps, having to remind himself to stay calm, because right now the people around may still want him back, this won't be the end of his modelling career but it will be if he loses his temper so quickly.

And even if Wilbur isn't the best of managers, and certainly not the best of friends, he still knows how to keep George sedated.

"More sultry charm," Wilbur shrugs, a grin on his lips when he utters his next words. "And for him to look like he wants to fuck the camera and not you."

Against his every wish, a redness burns across the front of George's nose. It's not uncommon for people to find him attractive—that's the whole reason he's a model for god's sake—but it never

needs to be put so crudely, especially when George has been ogled for years and still can't tell the difference between want and simple attraction.

"Shut up," George scoffs. Two arms are crossed in front of his chest, a jaw tilted to the skylines as he scans the room and fails to look anywhere other than at *Dream*.

"It's true."

Just the sight is infuriating—the way that Dream stands strong as though he hasn't a care in the world. He's calm when he shouldn't be, and strong even though the camera can't see it, and George is just about to give up—move on with his day and hopefully let Wilbur find a new shoot for him to attend, but he's stopped in his tracks by piercing green.

Dream looks back.

Dream looks back and doesn't look away.

His gaze is strong, a boyish charm to his smile, and when George's eyes harden Dream just continues to stare—an eyebrow raised and fanged teeth on display. He's almost attractive, George can understand why they wanted him, but even the greens to his eyes look new and there's no possible chance that the innocence behind them will fade away fast enough for Dream to be prepared for what's to come, unfortunately he'll just have to hope he can catch up.

But Dream knows how to get on George's nerves.

When he stares he holds confidence—the kind that he didn't hold when a camera was pointed at him, and it's the sinful evidence that he is capable of modelling and that if he tried then he'd be able to do well here. But Dream doesn't try, and because of his inattention, both he and George have been fucked over, with nothing to do other than hope that the cameraman will change his mind and beg for them back.

It lasts a second too long, the moment where Dream smiles but still doesn't look away, lingering for what feels like eons. And George knows that it would be dumb to engage, that him saying something would be dire, but he can't help himself. George's mouth will always be his downfall.

He's moving before he even knows it. George's lips are stretched into a thin line and his eyebrows are raised so high that they're almost running off his face, and in front of him, Dream doesn't move—only letting his smile grow wider as he watches George walk.

"Do you have a problem?" George says before he slows, a sharp, cutting edge to his tone that not even he can control.

And it's almost amusing to see Dream's face contort, the smallest essence of shock lacing through his features before he forces a smile back on there, looking dumb and happy in the most confusing way possible.

"What?" Dream questions, tone dripping with piercing uncertainty. It's just insult after injury, Dream somehow unable to grasp the fact that he's done something wrong and that George is evidently angry because he's too busy pretending to belong here.

Annoyance makes George's arms cross. He stands with chin tilted up, confident in his every move even though Dream is towering over him and can only look down. It's a spark and a crash, and George knows *why* Dream is a model, he can perfectly paint that picture of lust in his mind that the casting directors all felt when they saw a 6'2 (maybe '3) blond, football player type standing outside of a casting call, but that doesn't mean that George has to respect him—even if Dream is

mildly attractive, he still ruins everything he touches.

So George's lips are loose. He knows his place and he certainly knows Dream's, and despite how George does his best to make sure that Dream's painfully aware of that handcrafted hierarchy too, he can't be to blame for the stares, Dream has to learn that his actions have consequences.

"Look I get that you're new and all, but when you fuck me over, you're fucking yourself over too." George's tone is cold, his hands are on his hips, and Dream must see the frustration that bubbles under clear alabaster skin, but for better or for worse, he chooses to ignore it.

"I'm not sure I understand what you're saying," Dream questions with a laugh.

The quirk to his eyebrows is almost endearing, completely out of place on the smoothness of his features and George can't help but catch onto it.

The others don't seem to be listening, the cameraman off to one side and the makeup team too busy putting away their kits to pay attention to the words that George spits. And for that he's thankful, because there's no holding back the dangerous look he shoots in Dream's direction nor the bitterness in his voice.

"I'm saying that if you ever pull a stunt like that again, then I'll skin you alive."

All it earns is a laugh, a bitter, feeble moment where George's composure breaks and the confused boy in front of him turns to steel—still boyish and puzzled with doe eyes and a smile, but standing a little straighter, as if to give the illusion that he's not here just to be pushed around.

"What kind of stunt was I pulling?" Dream asks, eyebrow arched.

"The staring?" Despite it all, George won't let his composure shatter. He stares dead into Dream's eyes and keeps his poise, strength, hoping that Dream won't grow a spine out of nowhere and make George's anger look like an unparalleled tantrum. "You weren't even looking at the fucking camera, you were just watching me."

Under scrutiny, Dream just shrugs. A simple two words that he speaks as though they say it all. "You're attractive."

And George knows that. He knows that he's pretty and he knows that he's tempting, he wouldn't be here if he wasn't. They're models, that's the whole business, to look good at one point, and sexy at another, and frankly Dream is dumb for even assuming that George doesn't know his own looks, because they're the only reason he earns enough money to eat—float through college with only a few worries.

"Okay?" George mumbles, flat and inharmonious. It leaves the unspoken question still without end, every single feature on George's face pointed towards the same query.

Somehow—even with wide, open eyes and the dense quirk to his lips—Dream doesn't look bad. An almost perfect model that'll ridicule George time and time again, perhaps when he thinks back to how Dream couldn't keep his fucking stature in front of a camera but has no problem fixing it up in front of the other.

"It wasn't sabotage," Dream mumbles, wordless. "You're just a lot prettier in person."

George blanks. "Excuse me?"

"Not that you aren't pretty in photos," Dream rushes to explain. "Because you are, you're like

stunning, but in person you look so natural, and *real*—I almost can't believe you exist."

The words fly over George's head, running away before he can really process what they mean, and at some point it crossed the line from the things that all designers tell George to make him blush, and tripped into real meaning, something that makes George stop and stutter and force-stop the colour from rushing to his cheeks. "What?"

"Sorry," Dream smiles, all teeth and charm like he doesn't really mean the word. "You're just one of the whole reasons why I wanted to get into modelling." A shrug, broad shoulders bunching up to catch George's eye against harsh studio lights. "I mean you're doing this *and* a computer science degree, how do you even balance all that out?"

Still, at the end of the day, Dream is just another one of the guys that read about George once and thinks they know him, has the gall to analyse all of his inner workings. It's almost sad, the way George deflates immediately, half smile crashing and the pink he hadn't let get past his neck dropping back down to clear pearl, but it happens anyway and there's no way to stop it.

Disappointment is inevitable.

"Jesus Christ," George mutters, glancing to one side to try and catch Wilbur's eye so he can be saved. It doesn't happen though, instead Wilbur throws him a mocking thumbs up and acts like everything is normal, as though he can't see the barely concealed anger on George's face.

"You probably get this all the time," Dream tries after a while—unknowingly making the situation worse by bothering George when the other's voice is the last thing he wants to hear.

"Yeah," George sighs. "I do."

Politeness is everything. There's no way that people will want a young model back if they're bitchy, have an attitude about the whole thing. George has learnt that the hard way. Complaining about a piece being scratchy, or whining about there being too many people being in the room when he has to lie still and wait to get "the perfect shot" will only make the workers hate him.

If it weren't for what George holds—the way he hangs on between innocence and sex appeal so daintily—he'd have been out after his first gig, never being hired again just because of his stupid mouth. But directors like George now, they lust after the way he breathes and how he sits, and the pretty way that he holds his scare behind his eyes—the only person allowed to see it, himself.

So when George speaks again he lowers his tone, doing his best to make sure that the only person who'll hear his words is Dream. Not because he's scared of backlash, but because he can't tear his reputation from the people that don't know him—the ones that might still think that George enjoys what he does.

"A word of advice," George starts, cold and alone, and maybe Dream can hear the agony that sits between the lines, but even if he can't, George won't blame him. "If you want to be a model, try actually looking at the camera. No one's going to want you if you can't get over the nerves."

Innocence is all that newbies hold. "Excuse me?"

"I'm just saying that other models aren't as nice as me," George lies, he's not nice, he knows that. "They won't take so kindly to your..." A pause. A simple chance for Dream to catch up and hang off of the sentences that George speaks with pitiful concern. "...you."

It's a small wave of the hand, a gesture across Dream's body. And perhaps George is being harsh but in his opinion, Dream deserves the treatment. He's new and he's too happy for the world, and

he doesn't understand how the camera won't like that chastity.

If Dream ever wants to make it then he'll need to be more compelling.

"Thank you?"

"You're welcome," George utters, although the words don't really match his expression. "And I'm sure it's been a pleasure to meet me, considering how much of a fan you seem to be. Maybe in the future, when you're better, we can work together again."

Before Dream can respond, George is turning, spinning harsh on his heel and stalking off to where Wilbur stands with a tight lipped smile and his phone in one hand.

"Next Tuesday," he says before George can stop. "Cologne shoot, I've already accepted."

And that's just the way things will be. George will never have control over his own schedule because that job was given away the second he pressed a pen to that stupid fucking contract.

"I'll be there."

When George goes to class he's alone.

He sits at the back of the hall with his laptop open on the desk in front of him, and he makes rushed notes from a lecturer who's speaking far too quickly to be understood. There are no cameras watching him or pushy people staring in his direction, so George finds the freedom to look bad, his hood on his head and his hair a mess as it sticks together with dry shampoo and not enough grease.

Something about sitting in a class with a hundred other people his age makes George feel right—like he's not wasting away or going nowhere. There they don't care about his name, or the fact that he spends half of his time in front of designers that he will never remember and camera equipment that's too expensive to comprehend. There, he can be normal and pretend that he has real world friends and hobbies, because no one cares about the magazine he fronts, or the clothes he wears.

There, all they care about is the fact that he's failing.

Cologne shoots are always slightly awkward. They're more sensual than the others, always with some kind of music blaring in the background and a director that's far too engaged in the way they stand with blackened irises. And it's not George's least favourite type of shoot, because he's done far worse, definitely, but there's still something unsettling about this type of thing. From the way he's stared at to the way he's dressed in clothes that barely even fit.

What doesn't help, is the fact that George isn't doing it alone.

Apparently, Wilbur had forgotten to mention that he'd be sharing the day with Dream, again. All despite the fact that George had made his distaste for the other painfully obvious on the journey back home in Wilbur's car. Still, George supposes, things could be worse—this could be more

than just a cologne shoot, and Dream could be less interested in it actually working this time.

They're standing too close for it to be normal. For whatever reason most perfume companies prefer to make their commercials "sexy" with far less clothes than any other shoot and heavier eyelids than the usual. It's not something that George hates, he's taken photos of a similar kind with plenty a company, (and has a personal collection that are even more scandalous) so when he lets his hands sit in the pockets of black suit pants and allows his torso to remain shirtless, nothing in particular feels wrong.

Well, except for one thing.

Dream, the newbie, is doing far better than he had before. He's looking at all the right spaces and he's radiating all of the right energy, but for whatever reason it makes George tense, as though he's scared to let himself relax around the other.

Perhaps it's nerves, or maybe it's the fear that Dream will manage to fuck this up for him again, but George is terrified, and for that he can only feel hate. An unbridled frustration being directed towards the other even though, right now, he's nailing every move.

Clad in straight legged pants and pouting lips, Dream stands tall to George's right, just barely letting his elbow graze over the others arm. His breath is warm and his hair is styled so messily that at first glance it wouldn't even look intentional, like he's been dragged through a storm and has let his head brush against his pillow while he sleeps enough to ruffle the blond strands.

The fact that he's striking is undeniable, the camera's will love it, so George doesn't understand why it's getting on his nerves so much.

"There you go," a cameraman utters, hunched over while he stares through the ruptured lens.

The lack of instructions makes George's veins jump. Usually, he's prepared for things like this, but sometimes, just sometimes, he can feel his composure slipping, the glass behind his eyes real instead of being put on for the final photo.

"You okay?" Dream whispers, far too kind for the way that George last spoke to him.

All it is, is another reason why Dream shouldn't be here, why he's too nice to survive with the venom that this industry throws around. But at the very least, George appreciates the sentiment.

"Stop talking," George still snaps. He's consistent to say the least.

The clothing team must've had the easiest day of their lives when they chose the designs for the day. There's no real class behind the fabrics, they're tight and they're ill-fitting, and George feels far more exposed with the way the pants slip—showing off each curve of his waist and the way a red blush covers his abdomen—than when he's done more revealing shoots that no respectable company will ever post.

Because George has done underwear modelling, and swimsuit modelling, *hell*, his ex boyfriend asked him to pose nude and he said yes, but for some reason, doing it all with Dream standing behind him makes it all a thousand times more real.

Dream's looks are his charm. For all models, that's the way it is, but the free innocence that comes with his pointed looks are subject to George's analytical skill, his gall.

It's hate. That's what it is. It's what makes George's breathing slow and his tension spike. Spite is destructive and George has been feeding off of what could have been ever since Dream ruined their

first shoot, so there's no telling how this will all end, if Dream will drag George down again because he's mad at being spoken to like he's a dog.

"Closer," the cameraman directs. "I can't believe that you want it."

George doesn't even know if he does want *it*. He takes a step to the right, lets himself cover Dream and tilts his head away just to let the slope of his neck look that much more prominent. It's a move he's done a thousand times, a simple way to seem sultry and sensual, and it works on every occasion. Every model envies George, every director wants him, and Dream is no different. Dream wants George too, it's just a pity that he'll never have him.

But if there's one thing that George doesn't expect, it's for Dream to simply carry on, acting as though George isn't giving the camera everything in harsh straight lines and barely parted lips. Overnight, Dream became professional, the most infuriating trait of them all. He ignores George's body and looks straight ahead, no longer staring at him and doing everything he's meant to.

George hates it.

There's no filter in the air; by some means George feels as though he's overheating even with the fans blaring coolness around. It's all confusing, as though George can't understand his own body and the way he reacts is more than out of character, because George doesn't get flustered, that doesn't happen, and yet here he is, cranberry red running over his collarbones as Dream does nothing other than ignore him.

"Good," the cameraman says. "Sell it to me, give me sex." He means it, when the cameraman watches the two of them move, the drive behind his motions is obvious. A glance up and a glance away. "Give me the eyes, George, I know you can do it."

It's one of George's specialties. The way he can turn up the purity and make his whole face look heavy, like desire and thirst and all of the disgusting things that the camera can take. He's good at that, knows exactly what people want from him, and he'll get Dream to pay attention in one way or another, nobody disregards a personal show from George without some sort of repercussion.

"There," the cameraman mutters. "So good, perform for me."

Low on his hips, the pants slip, letting George's v-line stay on show as he's tugged back against a chest with a firm hand on his waist. At first he's surprised, eyes wide when Dream offers no explanation and instead keeps his gaze focused on what's ahead. But he has to stop himself from reacting too much because everyone else seems to love it, how George fits snug against bare skin and how pretty he looks with pink dusted over his cheeks.

"What are you doing?" George asks, quiet.

"Getting a good photo," Dream murmurs. "They told me to look at you how I was doing before."

Dream's chest is warm, his arms strong, and George will never admit that sometimes it feels good to be resting against someone else, but if he really didn't like it then he'd have made a scene—Dream should be grateful for his compliance.

"And how were you looking at me before?" George asks.

There's elegance in the way that he melts, falling back against Dream's body and letting skin slide over skin. The stretch of his neck is still lingering, an undying movement only making them both look as though this is a shoot of a different kind. In reality, George barely knows the brand they're working for, let alone the cologne that he's meant to be advertising, but what he does know is that

he's here to work, to make the magazine he's plastered in and the posters they're printed on that much more acidic.

"I don't know."

There's no stopping the laugh that bubbles in George's throat, even if he knows he has to wipe away the expression seconds after making it. "Like you want to fuck me?" He questions, more of a statement with a curved edge, crude. "You're obvious."

And Dream smiles too. It's perhaps the first time he's broken character all day. "No point in denying it," he mumbles, like he'd ever have a chance. "You're gorgeous."

George knows that. The fact that Dream feels the need to point it out is a joke.

A sharp voice pulls George from his anger. "Eyes on the camera."

The hairs on the back of George's neck stand up straight, coaxed into submission by the warm breath that fans over his skin. And the hand on his side doesn't roam lower, instead it pushes up, slipping over George's chest before George pushes it away under the guise of brushing his fingers through his hair.

"Never going to happen." He's cutting, brash, making sure Dream doesn't accidentally take lust from George's hatred. "I don't like guys like you."

"You don't have to like me to want me."

And this time, there's no stopping the blush from catching on George's features.

"You're insufferable," he offers. "I can tell you didn't pay any attention to my advice."

"On the contrary." Dream pushes further into George's space, taking and taking until all of the air is corrupted and there's nothing that George can do except continue to breathe. "I'm doing everything that you told me to."

The shoot ends far too quickly, not in shambles like before, but still too fast for George to comprehend. He's whirled through each movement with no awareness for his surroundings, and when being dragged through it all the only thing that really registers is the lack of touch that settles on his back, the missing sense of another behind him.

There's idle talk and a thousand smiles, Wilbur standing off to one side with his phone in his hand while George wanders over, off put and dazed. "You're amazing," he starts, smiling when George can't. "Fantastic, the editors are in love."

A hum. "Of course they are."

In a cold room, George shrugs on a jacket, something soft and easy that's more like a wool cardigan than anything else. And he stands with his arms crossed in front of his chest, just waiting in case they decide that they need something new from him.

One minute turns to two, and George is glancing around the room with hurried eyes as he stands and wonders when he'll ever be of use. There's no point in mingling, he's talked to everyone in this room a thousand times and even though he doesn't know the names of everyone there, he certainly knows their faces and they certainly know his. Why would he pretend to care?

But over in the far corner—where the makeup team sits and the long mirrors are barely staying up

—a single laugh ruins George’s whole integrity, makes his eyes roll and his nostrils flare. It may not be a sound that George has heard before but it’s still familiar. He takes one glance in the direction of the sound and feels his lip twitch in distaste, the sight of Dream leaning back against the counter and letting subtle muscles flex, so unsavoury that George can’t help but scoff.

He hates the way that Dream laps up attention, acting as though he’s been hired to talk and not just sit and look pretty. And perhaps that’s because George knows he could never do the same—he’s far too concerned with how he comes across to the people that matter to say something that could come back and bite him later.

Clashing, Dream doesn’t seem to care. He’s taking George’s “advice” and pushing it to the next level, maybe just to spite him, or maybe because he thinks the feat is impressive—George hates both intentions.

The bat of Dream’s hand is alluring, the way he lets his head fall forward and crosses his arms in front of his chest, not really hiding from any lustful glances; part of George recognises the move because he’s done it himself—when he’s trying to look bashful in lieu of the compliments thrown at him. On Dream it doesn’t look as good. On Dream it’s cocky and confident, and strikes so hard against the innocence that George pretends he has.

Far too quickly, George is moving. He’s not sure why Dream annoys him so much, because it’s gone past subtle antipathy and has dove into something dangerous. But he knows that he needs to intervene, knock the other down a peg so that he doesn’t think that he can get away with absolutely anything.

So he strolls into the middle of a conversation, taking attention for granted as the eyes all fall upon him, worshipping him in the way that everyone here does. “What are you guys talking about?” He asks, smiling at a makeup artist with a grin that doesn’t really meet his eyes.

She doesn’t really smile back, just nods in acknowledgement and turns back to Dream, wanting.

But unlucky for her, Dream can’t help but place all of his focus on George. He may not be pleasant to be around but at least he knows George’s worth.

“Oh nothing,” Dream shrugs. “Just my tattoo.”

He’s still shirtless. Apparently, in Dream’s mind, even though the shoot is over there’s no reason to change or cover up in the way that George has. It’s not lewd, it’s Dream’s body, he can do whatever the fuck he wants with it, George doesn’t care, but alongside the stares that he’s collecting and the way that he stands in too tight pants, Dream seems to thrive off of the reaction he elicits from the people around.

“Tattoo?” He asks.

Models don’t have tattoos, at least not ones like Dream. Their whole trade is their body, why cover that up in ink that’ll never fade? No, it’s a lie, an intriguing one perhaps, but a lie nonetheless.

“Yeah, down here,” Dream says, pointing down to his v-line and his hips, begging George to look even though he knows it’s a trap. “We were just talking about how glad we are that the pants managed to cover it, it’d be hell to try and hide.”

A soft giggle, not from Dream or George, and apparently the sound is far worse than Dream’s own laugh, it’s far more high pitched and far more flirty—shrill and grating—yet George can’t pinpoint the exact reason as to why he hates it.

When Dream catches George's view he manages to catch the light as well, subtle inflections of gold stripping across his skin and drawing the eye of everyone else in the room too.

The spot in which George stands is sweet. He lets baggy, warm material cascade across his chest, allowing for smooth greyish fabric to hang low over the dips and curves of his figure. Unlike Dream he looks like perfection, not rugged or broken, soft, like purity itself.

Which is exactly why George is the one deserving of the camera, the reason why he's been fully booked every week since he was seventeen. George knows what he's doing in a way that Dream never will, and these people aren't worthy of ogling Dream like he's some masterpiece that could easily be reached. He's not a masterpiece, he's just another one of the guys that'll spend their lives at George's feet, wishing for something that they'll never be granted.

"Understandable," George blanks, monotonous. "I'm sure it'd be awful to get that close to you."

"We didn't say that," the makeup artist laughs, a sickly sweet smile on her lips when she bats her eyelashes in Dream's direction—without any of the grace that George holds or the allure that he knows he has.

"I'm sure you didn't," George laughs, bitter. Dream doesn't want her. Dream wants him. He doesn't know why she's bothered to even try.

Perhaps the look that he shoots her is undeserved. There's no malice in her intent and she in reality hasn't done a thing wrong, but something dark makes George blind, huffing when he shouldn't be and rolling his eyes when Dream tries to catch him out.

It's not a staring match because Dream looks away too soon, as if to break tension that isn't even there. It's with the knowledge that Dream wants him, and the confidence that everyone does, that George pulls a tired face in the direction of the others, sending them away without having to utter a single word.

They do as he asks, leaving quickly with far more than a second glance in the two that stay's direction.

"That was rude," Dream comments.

"Shut up."

This time his laugh is obnoxious—a little sweeter considering the fact that it's meant for George's ears only. "God *you* are mouthy."

George isn't mouthy; he's just opinionated.

"Sorry if it's uncomfortable to see everyone staring at you like you're a piece of meat," he attempts trying to find a reason for his involvance even though he doesn't particularly know why he did it himself.

Dream raises an eyebrow.

"I mean it's weird," George continues. "Where's the professionalism?"

Umber eyes drop from Dream's to his lips, completely unexplainable as George stands without a single care for the other.

"If I didn't know any better than I'd say you're jealous," Dream smiles, half a chuckle on his

features as he says something that's simply not true.

"What?"

A smile, confidence incarnate. "It seems like you don't like having to share my attention,"

"Please," George scoffs. "I don't care about who you speak to."

Dream acts as though he can see through him, as though he can look past steadily built walls to see what lies beneath, and George hates it. From head to toe, he hates Dream and every pitiful thing that he embodies.

"Sure thing," Dream breathes.

What runs through George's veins is red. It's like anger, almost, and yet the spark in Dream's eye attempts to make the thoughts more dulcet.

"How did you even manage it anyway?" George asks, because he loves to watch the people in front of him crumble.

"Manage what?"

"To stop shaking," George antagonises. He presses forwards, a quirk to his lips that will never be subdued, and it's only because George lets him that Dream can see the way George's neck stretches up from his chest, why that strip of perfect alabaster is revealed in a manner that could almost seem unintentional. "Last time it looked like you were going to pass out, what changed?"

The tone is condescending, posture as though he's looking down at the other even though Dream towers above him. And George knows he's wanted, so why not tease? It's not as though it means anything anyway.

"Nothing really," Dream shrugs, dismissive with eyes that tell a different story. "Perhaps I realised that you're actually a person and not something to be afraid of."

It's not true, it can't be. Dream fears George in the way a mouse would fear a cat, like something far bigger than him has a power he'll never understand, envy in green and jealousy a shade beneath, pretty and ethereal and all the things that George has mastered.

"You're still afraid of me," George states.

And Dream can't keep appearance up for too long. There's a reason why George is the best and Dream is just the new guy, never to be seen on his level despite the fact that they've shot together on more occasions than one.

"How can you tell?"

"You're a flirt," George sighs. Confidence—acting smug even though that's an attribute he's stolen directly from the other. "Still not managing to look me in the eye though."

Dream's head is pushed to one side where he stands, a clear indication of the fact that he's still enamoured by the other, attempting not to show it and acting as though it's not a crush that's translated from the covers of magazines to the real picture right in front of him. The point of his jawline is sharp, and his skin still looks warm when George watches him stretch, eyes dipping down to where the tattoo that Dream apparently has, must sit.

“Is this better?” Dream asks, chrome green irises flicking up within the second. They drag across George’s legs and they linger around his waist, analysing every single speck with the hopes of making George flustered. (If it works then he doesn’t want it mentioned).

The way that eye contact can feel bruising is a sense that George has never really felt. Usually, he’s the one on the other side of a stare, the one that holds the power in all of the situations he’s been in. But Dream is confusing—he’s different and new and George doesn’t like the things he doesn’t understand, so while Dream is every cameraman’s wet dream, he’s George’s nightmare.

“I don’t like you.” George is blunt. He’s pretty and he’s mean, and the filter that he holds towards others doesn’t seem to apply to Dream.

“I like you though,” Dream still says.

And something inside of George snaps. He doesn’t know what it is, and he’ll never be able to explain what persuades him to grab Dream by the back of the neck and pull him forwards, one hand on his waist and the other just dragging him down, but it happens and George can’t take it back. In fact, he doesn’t know if he even wants to.

He rolls his eyes. Bad decisions come easy to George. He’s being paid for his looks, not his smarts. “What the hell.”

Hands grab at hair, fire in George’s veins as he moves, and Dream just pulls him closer as though this was always how they were going to end up. It’s not until they’re out of sight that they’re kissing. George is pushing Dream against a stone wall and pressing their lips together with no real plan. It’s rushed and it’s messy, but it’s so uniquely Dream that George can’t find it in himself to care.

Ivory teeth snag over Dream’s lower lip, breaking skin as they move with more force than necessary. The clash is too quick to comprehend, it’s fuelled by anger and colour, and all of the things that George is scared of, but he’s still in control, giving Dream everything he’s ever wanted while taking what he needs for himself.

“Holy shit,” Dream gasps, doing his best to find a good place to put his hands. “You’re such a good kisser.”

The words elicit a laugh from George’s throat. He kisses up and makes sure that Dream can’t do anything more than stare him down, pleading for more because he knows that George will be the one to hand it over. In spite of the fact that Dream is awestruck, he still manages to kiss back, biting down when he can and kissing George as though it’s the last thing he’ll ever do.

“I know,” George smiles.

His nails run up Dream’s sides, dragging over bare skin to try and leave puffy red marks over the places that he’s touched. It’ll be a constant reminder that George has been there, at least until they go away, and Dream will be able to go home and trace the scratches with only the other on his mind.

There’s no way that Dream is deserving of this. George hates what he thinks and the way that Dream can change with ease, adapt to everything and never reap real consequences. But it drives him mad in a way that only this can cure, in a way that only Dream’s touch can solve.

“Oh fuck,” Dream groans, hips bucking at how George drags his fingers down to cup him in his pants, palming him until his kisses become sloppy.

It's almost embarrassing, how quickly Dream gets hard—desperate and pliable as he tries to find his footing, and maybe George would find it funny if it weren't for the way his eyes are clouded over with lust, influencing his every movement as he pulls at Dream's belt and messes with a small buckle.

"Can I suck you off?" George asks, eyes wide as he glances up.

And he's never seen a man look so happy, like all of his wishes have come true at once, something completely incomprehensible being given to him with seemingly nothing to make it sour.

"George."

"Is that a yes?"

"Yes," Dream nods. "Fuck, it's *definitely* a yes, please."

The ground is harsh as George drops to his knees. It's an unforgiving floor, one that will cause his knees to bruise come morning, but with the way that Dream breathes and waits, there's no chance that George will stop now.

For Dream, the angle is perfect, it lets the light hang over him and his shoulders look sloped, but George knows that on his knees he looks godly too, like he holds power and innocence and all of the things that people want.

"What if we get caught?" Dream asks, not once looking away from George's actions.

His belt is on tight and it's a struggle for George to get it off, practically glued to Dream's body before it's thrown to one side as though it's cheap and not worth more than the both of them combined.

George hasn't done this before, not at a modelling shoot with everyone he needs to impress just behind a corner, and he's scared too, but he won't let that show. Because right now the only thing that he wants to do is get his mouth on Dream. "We won't."

"But—"

A huff; annoyance in umber eyes. "Do you want me to suck your dick, or not?"

"I do," Dream nods, hurried and quick as though if he doesn't answer fast enough then George will leave him here like this. "Please, yes."

A smile spreads across George's face, quirked at the edges to make him look cutting. And cockiness is an expression that suits him of course, but it's not often that he gets to wear it, only in the more secluded moments where sinlessness doesn't need to be advertised does George get to wear the expression that he means the most.

His pants fit every curve, George dragging down black material to see what lies beneath, and poking out the top of his underwear there's something black, a sharp edge that runs across his v line and catches onto George's interest. The pants are thrown to the side, Dream's boxers tenting at the front as a small spot makes itself obvious, and George's breathing grows quick as he tries to make himself appear calm.

"So you weren't lying," George shrugs, as he pulls down Dream's boxers. There's a tattoo on skin, hip bones prominent as Dream leans back and lets the other ogle. It's a sharp black line that branches out into many, sticking out and wrapping around Dream's hip and the tops of his thighs. And George is jealous to say the least, because there's no chance that he could get something like

this on his body without a repercussion, so why is it fair that Dream's allowed?

The boxers hang low, covering up the thing that George wants to say the most as he tries to focus on the tattoo, look nonchalant about the whole thing.

"What?" Dream questions.

"The tattoo," George says. "It looks good." He lets one finger trace across the mark. "Tacky maybe, but good."

He lets his fingers dip into the waistband of Dream's underwear, hovering slightly while he watches a small patch grow on the material. And there's no use in waiting too long so George doesn't, he takes a shallow breath and pulls Dream's boxers down fully, completely unprepared to see what lies beneath.

Dream is big. It's not surprising, that kind of an ego and guys of Dream's stature are always well hung, but Dream is definitely bigger than most, and George can't quite figure out how to breathe. He's long, and he's thick, and it'll be a struggle to fit in his mouth but George will never say that; he can't have Dream getting cocky again.

"Always so charming," Dream utters, biting off his words when George wraps a hand around him.

He uses his own spit as some sort of lube, stroking Dream slowly and twisting his hand on the upstroke to make it that much sweeter. Invariably, he's good at this, he knows it, so there's no shock to the way that Dream's hips buck up as his desperation becomes more.

"Quiet," George reminds him. Because even if they're off to one side they're still within walking distance of everyone else, and he'd rather not be seen giving a blow job to the guy that doesn't even deserve to see him clothed.

He wraps two hands around the base of Dream's cock, keeping one in place while he jerks Dream slowly, just teasing him while he lets his mouth hang wide, wetting his bottom lip with a pink tongue. One glance up is to taunt, the second is to make sure Dream knows what's about to happen.

The tip is guided between George's lips, falling onto his tongue when he flattens it and looks up, batting his eyelashes while Dream can't do anything other than stare. He's not being discreet about it, George wants to be watched, and the best way to show Dream that George will always be better than him is to make him mindless with just his mouth.

It's heavy on his tongue, pre-cum salty as Dream does his best not to push his hips forward, and George almost commends his self-restraint until there's a hand in his hair that's pulling him forward and further onto Dream's cock. His lips stretch wide as he tries to take it all, show Dream just how good he can be and flaunt exactly why he'll never compare.

So he tries to relax and make his jaw go slack but it proves more difficult than it usually would with the way that Dream coaxes him into it.

"So good," Dream pants, clearly needing more even though George is struggling not to choke around him.

Against the hand in his hair, George pulls back, letting Dream's cock slip from his mouth inch by inch. He keeps a hand on the base to stroke what he can't take, tightening his lips when Dream gasps and digging his tongue into the slit. And when he does it all, he makes sure to look up, letting Dream know exactly who's giving this to him so he'll never forget.

The feeling is stifling, George's mouth so full that the only way he can breathe is through his nose, and it'd be so much easier to focus on getting it right if Dream's hand wasn't in his hair and massaging his scalp, just trying to make him stay pliable.

"You're so good with your mouth, George," Dream mumbles, slowly letting his hips roll forward even though the look that George shoots at him is dangerous. "Even when you're giving me those eyes, so fucking pretty."

It takes everything in George's control to not let Dream win. He uses his tongue to pay attention to the parts that his lips aren't wrapped around, doing his best to not let his eyes roll back into his head when his hair is pulled. And at first it's just a single motion but before George knows it, Dream is gently fucking into his mouth, trying to take whatever he can get while his cock twitches on George's tongue.

He pulls off before his mind can get clouded. "Don't get cocky?" he spits, voice already hoarse as he holds Dream's cock next to his cheek.

"How could I not?" Dream groans. "You're gorgeous."

There's no telling where the confidence comes from—how all of a sudden something new can take over Dream's personality and make him into a character that can't see any flaws between the two of them, but George likes it, and he likes the way he's handled—even if he'll never let Dream know.

"Shut up," George mutters, pitiful as he lets himself be pulled back onto the other, jaw hanging open as he allows Dream to act as though he's in control.

How long it lasts is unclear. All George knows is the fact that Dream sounds pretty, gasping on moans and muffling each sound with the back of his palm as he thrusts into George with little other than reckless abandon. It's not charming or gentlemanly but that's the way that George likes it—he's always had a thing for the guys that act as though they're his opposite even though George has never shown them anything real.

"Close," Dream pants. His grip tightens as he holds George there, fucking his mouth like it was only made for him to use. "Fuck, George."

There isn't much that George can do, he likes the feeling of being needed, the way that Dream pleads for him to keep up the tightness of his lips and so he makes it easy, doe eyed and dulcet as Dream's movements start to get frantic. His jaw aches, and will click by tomorrow but now George can't force himself to care, not when Dream stands so perfectly above him.

"I'm cumming," Dream mutters, eyes squeezed shut as he throws his head back and tries not to get too loud. "*Fuck.*"

The taste isn't pleasant, and George won't pretend that it is. He isn't held there because Dream's too preoccupied with covering his mouth to hold George in place, so he can pull back and let Dream's cum fall from his mouth to splatter down his lips and chin instead, painting the messy picture that for once, George hopes won't be remembered.

"Fuck," Dream breathes, voice tired even though he wasn't doing any of the work. Strong hands reach down to bring George up, pulling him flat against a bare chest that's flushed red and painted with lust. "Do you want me to return the favour?"

And George can taste Dream on his lips, can feel him everywhere, ghosting touches in places that

he hasn't even felt. It's suffocating, and different, and for some reason it doesn't feel wrong, but it's too much. At least for right now.

"No," he mutters, passing half a glance over Dream's dishevelled figure.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes." George takes his hand and pushes it through his hair, tacky, clear skin catching the strands that he can't quite hold. There, Dream is in front of him, watching his every movement as though it's something out of a fairy-tale, not just a confused man trying to catch the pieces he knows he needs to fix. "I guess I'll see you later then. Don't try to call."

Outside of George's favourite café, there's a bus stop that he waits at to take him from place to place.

Today when he goes to stand under the roof he's met with a full length poster, one that doesn't showcase himself. Instead it's a headshot, a brand name plastered across the photo, and yet the only thing that George watches is the way that pale raindrops track over Dream's freckles.

He hasn't heard from Dream after the incident. And frankly, he's not too sure if he wants to. Because they're confusing—feelings, and George doesn't quite know Dream's character, or why he does the things that he does. But what he does know is that he may have judged a bit too quick, that not everyone has to fit the cookie cutter shape in George's mind, and sometimes he'll have to adjust.

So the poster doesn't annoy him (not too much anyway) and George goes on with his day like nothing's changed.

The parties weren't a thing that George was told about before he signed his first contract.

They're a place for people to mingle, models and designers alike, and anyone who's anyone will be there, so George will never be able to understand how he was invited too, even if he pretends that he belongs in the same way that everyone else does.

When Wilbur calls to tell George about this party, the first thing that George does is sigh, because he doesn't want to go, there's no reason for him to *want* to go, but in the end he agrees because he needs a job, and there's no way to get a gig without connections, even if George wishes there were.

It's a busy place, something that looks more like a rented out nightclub than the classy dinner that George was promised. And on his back his clothes are tight and figure hugging, just so everyone can see what they'll get if they decide to buy George for their next shoot. Blemishes are covered up so no one can see them, red dragged across George's lips and then dabbed off so that anyone would think it was natural. Getting here was a process in itself, there's no point in breaking the perfect illusion now.

George's least favourite designers are the men. When they touch, they touch, and when they talk, they talk, and quite frankly, George is over pretending to be enamoured by their "charm" and batting his eyelashes at the ones who promise him the world, but he does it anyway—he has to.

One thing that George didn't expect though, was for Dream to be there too.

Off to one side, in a suit that fits him far too well, Dream stands with a glass in his hands, talking to a woman that George doesn't recognise and smiling in a way that has to be forced. For the first time in forever, George sees Dream look uncomfortable.

These types of parties make everyone uncomfortable though—or at least they should. Because there's nothing worse than men that don't know personal space and the others that allow it when you're already having a bad day. But a part of George is used to it. He lets there be a hand on his hip as he's guided from room to room and he allows himself to be flattered and complimented until all he can do is laugh in reciprocity.

But one designer is more pushy than the others. He's not new, of course not. In fact he's a large name that George could only ever dream of working with, which is the exact reason why he allows himself to be ogled, called pretty in a thousand languages and given fleeting touches across his chest and on his hip before one finally settles on his shoulder, a thumb brushing over his neck.

The way George laughs is fake, high pitched and completely manufactured as it falls upon business men's ears. He holds a glass that he doesn't drink from, making it look as though he's actually involved in the whole affair, and when he stands by the side of a guy he'd never usually touch, the smile that's spread across his lips has been practiced so many times that it's commonplace.

"This one," the designer says, pointing at George's face with a grin. "Is going to go far."

It's a small circle of people, all standing inwards as they chatter amongst themselves, and George isn't fully involved in the conversation as much as he's just standing there to look included, but to an outsider he'd appear perfectly at home with a bunch of strangers.

"You flatter me," he laughs, batting a hand to one side in false humour.

"No I mean it," they continue. "You guys need to see his works, he's stunning in front of a camera."

This time the laugh is just as forged. George smiles and he nods, and he says all of the things he needs to say in order to look good with everyone watching. And although it all seems to go to plan, there's no shaking the feeling of being watched—a sense that tells George not everyone has bought into his righteous act.

A presence lingers behind him momentarily, ghosting over his form as George pretends it's not even there. But that ignorance can only be kept up for a second, and before George can finally seal the deal with a guy that's promising him the cover of 'Vanity Fair' there's a hand on the low of his back, dragging him out of every conversation in mere seconds.

"Hey," Dream says, smiling down at George like they're friends—like the other doesn't hate even the ground he walks on.

"Hi," George chirps, keeping up appearance.

It's almost worth it to see the simple shock that flickers across Dream's face, something that delves into amusement as George beams at him and turns away, not even bothering to knock the others' grip off of his skin because there's no chance that the people that matter won't see. The quirk to

Dream's eyebrow is obvious, puzzle in his eyes as he scans who's around and attempts to figure out the reason for George's sudden switch.

His confusion is blatant, and George can't fault him for it. But if there's one thing he can't have it's Dream ruining this for him, so instead of leaning in he tilts his head back, letting his blush do the work as he says, "I'm so sorry, can we be excused for one moment? There's something we need to discuss."

It's taken well, with small uproar and displeased expressions that George tries to not let sting. So with a final glance, George takes advantage of Dream's hand on his back and uses it to gently push the other to the side, grabbing his wrist as discreetly as he can and pulling him along to a room that's almost empty.

With small smiles and even more feeble glances, George does everything in his power not to make a scene, dragging Dream close behind him and doing his best as to not let the other's whining get to him. Because obviously, Dream has to draw attention; he has to call George's name as they walk and beg for an explanation even though he's the one that got them in this situation in the first place. And if it continues for much longer then George will snap, but thankfully it doesn't get that far.

One room is empty and George shoves Dream in, letting the door slam shut behind them and the chatter of the party die out with it. Hands are thrown up, eyes are narrowed and the words that fly from George's lips are like poison, danger.

"What the fuck do you want?"

Surprisingly, Dream chuckles. "There he is," he muses, studying George with unfiltered mirth. And if it weren't for the way his suit fits him so well then George would manage to hold his anger a little stronger, be more confident with his words. But Dream just watches him like he's putting on a show, toying with his white shirt where it comes out at the sleeves underneath his blazer.

"Do you get a kick out of ruining my career or something?" George still spits. Golden hair and an ego won't be the thing that causes his demise.

"No," Dream states, blank, monotonous. "Do you get a kick out of yelling at me?"

The way that George's eye twitches can't be helped.

"You're funny George," Dream shrugs, eyes jumping up and down to make George switch from foot to foot. And it almost feels off to be talking to Dream like this after the things he's seen—now that he knows exactly how Dream looks when he's falling apart and desperate for the other, but there's no going back to change the past, and George will just have to hope that Dream isn't reading too far into it.

"I'm not trying to be."

Dream waves it off, ignoring George's subtle frustration.

"I don't understand you, you know?" He says instead. "Like, I thought I had you all figured out but I don't think I do."

It's audacity that powers Dream's every movement, and George is almost used to the feeling of surprise even though he wishes he wasn't. There's nothing for Dream to analyse, absolutely nothing for him to watch, and the fact that he thinks he can stand there and take George apart is both brave and stupid, because George doesn't fold to the people that think they know everything he's ever been through.

“What does that mean?” He huffs anyway.

“It means that in photos you seemed so perfect, and confident—I almost envied you for it, but now I’ve talked to you, and I’ve worked with you, and I can’t understand what you’re really about.” A pause. A time for George to take it in and cross his arms like the words don’t make him want to throw a punch. “Sometimes you want me and sometimes you hate me. There are moments where you think you shouldn’t speak and others where you’re putting on a new personality and talking to those people out there like you love them. But sometimes you just look scared, and I don’t get it. Why do you put on so many different acts?”

Dream almost looks distraught, as if what George does in his spare time actually affects him in any way possible.

“It’s none of your business,” George scoffs, because it’s not. Dream is just another guy that wants to waltz into George’s life and learn every pitiful thing that influences his actions. It’s not new, there have been guys that thought they could do the same and every few months they come back and beg for George’s forgiveness, but none of them have had Dream’s charm—his looks nor his smile, not even his confidence.

Maybe that’s the reason that George feels bad when he barks, why turning the other down doesn’t seem to make sense in the planes of his mind. Simple attraction shouldn’t make George dumb, in reality he shouldn’t even like the other, and maybe he doesn’t—it could be something else that makes him feel like sharing, but it’s there and for now the only thing that he can do is deliberate.

“You don’t have to tell me.”

And it’s just like throwing a dog a bone. It doesn’t mean anything when George melts and the way his expression flickers doesn’t say a thing about the way he feels towards Dream. It’s all confusion and it’s all too slow. Dream manages to pry open the shell that is George and there’s no telling that he even understands how much it means.

“If I didn’t I wouldn’t have a job,” George mumbles, almost incomprehensible. Yet Dream still hangs onto the few words, leaning forwards as George takes a breath and rolls his eyes, body not even facing the other’s direction when he speaks, just because no one deserves to see him say words that could be meaningful. “I don’t like this industry, you can’t really form attachments.”

It’s not the first time he’s said it, but the first time he’s been humoured with a response from someone who at least pretends to care.

“Why not?”

“Because they don’t last,” George says scornfully. “They never do.”

Understanding isn’t an emotion that makes itself evident in Dream’s expression. He’s trying, George can tell, but without explanation he’ll never get it—see why everything can’t be as simple as he makes it out to be.

“You show someone what you’re actually about and they run, they stop hiring you for shoots,” George spits, tired. Each syllable is pointed in the other’s expression, wrapped in acidity and mellow, mellow scrutiny. “You’re not the pretty little model with no worries anymore, you’re the weirdo that’s flunking out of college and probably shouldn’t be on the face of any magazines. Nothing lasts unless you give everyone what they need to see—not what they want to.”

Silence. Fruitless words being drowned by George’s emotion because he’s been here before and he

knows exactly how it's going to go for Dream too. There's no surprise for a person who's been around for as long as him, George knows the facts.

But he's not allowed the satisfaction of being right. Quiet and simmering, Dream pipes up with a sad smile. "They could last," he offers. "If you tried."

"You think I haven't?" George snaps. "Sorry." His posture deflates, a sigh on his lips. "I shouldn't yell."

"No it's fine." Dream shakes his head. "I don't mind."

If George is confusing then Dream is a thousand times worse. At every moment, George feels as though he can pick the other apart completely—from a coward to someone courageous, from someone that's seen George's pretty face and liked what they saw, to the guy that actually wants to get to know him, different. So George inhales, sharp, and lets his lungs deflate with more force than necessary. "Of course you don't."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean you're practically obsessed with me," George states. "You'd probably love to see me lose it just so you can sell the story out there and make sure I'm never hired again."

Dream laughs. "You overestimate me."

A scoff. "Yeah right."

"I like you," Dream shrugs as though it explains it all. "You're different, complicated,"

"I'm not a puzzle."

"I never said you were," Dream rebuts. "I don't need to figure you out."

"Then what do you need?"

George was young when he was in his first magazine. They'd pampered him and called him beautiful, and dragged him out of London to dump him in America where the stars don't shine as bright.

Wilbur lived in L.A. He'd met George at a café and told him he was going to go far, that his education wouldn't suffer if he was strong enough and stupidly, George had believed him.

Now it's been years and George hasn't been able to face a phone call from his family without breaking down. He's scared that his manager will drop him without a second thought and he hasn't had a boyfriend in two years. Dream is new, and new is scary. New hasn't had the chance to toughen up and realise how fucked they are if they continue in front of a camera for a second longer.

"Let me take you out," Dream says, cutting off George's every thought with a decisive tone.

"On a date?" Dream nods. "Not a chance."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't like you," George spits, although he doesn't even know if it's true. "I don't."

"I think you'd like me if we got to know each other."

But what Dream doesn't understand is that there is no getting to know each other. There's no free time with the lives that George balances, and there's no possible way for him to dangle another string amongst the others. He can't let himself be open with the other and expect no pain with freedom, that's not how life works.

"And when you're booked in New York for fashion week?" George bites. "Or I have to fly to the Netherlands for a shoot that takes a month?"

Oddly, Dream is silent.

"It wouldn't work out."

"You don't want it to work out,"

George may hate him, but he isn't wrong.

"Give me a chance," Dream tries. It's not begging but it's getting there, getting to a tone that isn't strong and eyes that hold no secrets.

So many people want George. They've seen his face and his body and wondered what he'd look like on their arm instead, and honestly George can't fault him. There's a reason that he is where he is, and if Dream wants to prove that he's different to everybody else then he'll need to show it in a way that doesn't ruin the career that George doesn't even like.

But a date is scary. Especially when George hasn't been on one in what feels like eons. "Why?"

"Because I'm asking nicely," Dream says, easy. "And I know that you want to."

It only takes a second for George to break, let everything go up in flames as he wonders how bad it could really be, what would happen if he lets himself hold a smile for once in his own life. Dream is attractive, his smile is warm. And out of everybody that George has talked to in a room of a thousand faces, Dream seems to be the only one that he'd ever seek out for that second conversation.

In all aspects other than the one George pretends to value, Dream is perfect.

"Fine," George huffs, "But only one chance, and if it doesn't work then we don't try again."

Glee is in Dream's grin. "That works for me."

"Call me an uber," George orders, rolling his eyes and snapping his fingers. "I'm going home."

In college George is lonely, his classes aren't getting better and there's no chance that he'll manage to get his grades up by the end of the semester. But he still tries.

When George sits down he works hard, and he prays. He hunches over his books and drags a mechanical pencil over paper as he scratches out equations and bits of code that don't fully work, and even though it all seems as though it's for nothing, it's not, because George likes being able to work—having a use.

Although, sometimes George will get distracted. His phone will ring and he'll have to answer it, or

his notifications will go wild until he gives in and decides to see what the interruption is, and every single time it's the same person. Every single time it's Dream, the guy that still has enough innocence to share his hopes with George and not make them sound like fantasy. The guy that's managed to make things seem a little less dull.

Maybe George still scoffs when Dream says something stupid, and rolls his eyes when the other decides to be an idiot and act as though he's above judgement—for that George still hates him—but at the root of every problem George sits and wonders why he let it get that deep.

And even if he's still failing and still doesn't know what to do with himself, George finds some ease in the fact that he doesn't have to do it all alone.

For whatever reason, George lets Dream tag along to his shoots.

It's not a good idea, not when Dream is so overprotective already and when they stand together Dream can never stop his hands from roaming, but he was given clear, direct instructions and George trusts him enough for him to not fuck with what the other is doing.

Underwear modelling is almost as bad as cologne modelling. Well, in some aspects it's worse. With underwear modelling there can be some class, George is allowed to stand in a position that makes him look tall, wander around the white studio to make lines that look streamline and poses that seem natural, but the lack of clothing and the way his whole body is on show will always be victim to some level of insecurity.

He's not doing the shoot alone. There's another model—some guy named Punz—that's here to go through it all with him. And they aren't as close as he and Dream had been on their second shoot, but they're still in front of the camera together, hence why Dream is standing to one side with a pout on his lips as he watches.

George's hands are by his sides, the other man's are in his hair, and they look good. It'll be a great photo, but the sight of Dream off to one side frowning manages to take George's attention and make his sultry look sour.

There's dark music blasting in the corner, guiding George through his every movement as he stands and swivels and does everything in his power to look confident.

Barely dressed looks good on him and George knows it. Everyone else does too.

As soon as the cameras are off, George is shrugging on a cardigan and letting himself walk over to Dream with venom on his lips. Aventurine eyes stare daggers in the direction of the other model, anger so pitifully concealed that George can see Dream's every imperfection under harsh studio lighting. And when George walks across he shakes his head, allowing annoyance to push onto his expression when he crosses his arms and hopes that Dream will learn subtlety.

"Heel," he snaps, clicking his fingers and pointing at the floor. "Calm down, god you look like you want to kill that guy."

Dream pouts again, head cocked to one side when George gets close enough to invade his personal space. "I don't like him," Dream shrugs. "He's looking at you."

“Everybody looks at me Dream, it’s a part of the job,” George sighs, glancing up with unimpressed eyes.

He lets the cardigan wrap around his skin, cold air making marrow skin grow pink and touched. And the way that Dream stares at the exposed strip, with red irises and enough force to make George shudder, only manages to showcase all of the reasons that George shouldn’t have let him come, why Dream’s presence is always going to be a risk.

“But he’s *looking* at you,” Dream whines, reaching out to tug George closer. He’s insufferable, far too much for the time and the place, but George can only resist for so long and before he knows it he’s letting himself be dragged into Dream’s arms.

“Next time you’re staying home while I go off to do this,” George mutters, instantly regretting his words with the way that Dream stiffens and forces a fake frown on his face.

“No, George,” he groans, pulling him even closer to try and press their heads together. He’s a sap, overly sweet and as dumb as rocks, but George is learning to adapt to that idiocy.

“Get the fuck off of me,” he scoffs, pushing at Dream’s arms fruitlessly to try and get them to loosen up.

“I want to kiss you,” Dream mumbles. “Can I kiss you, George?”

He clearly doesn’t care for the people around: the other model and their manager, or the cameraman and the rest of the crew. Dream doesn’t care and that’s dangerous, tempting. A laugh is cut short by Dream’s hands and how they roam, cold fingertips sneaking under George’s clothes to trace over his skin, melting ice against alabaster to see if it’ll make the finger prints stick.

They’ve been here time and time again. The passion of new relationships will always be something that George thrives off of and perhaps it’s because he still lets himself be convinced that there’s an element of hate in his mind towards the other, that he lets himself be mauled so easily.

Meeting Dream’s eyes is simple. He’s everything that George isn’t, a caricature of innocence and free will that George can’t help but be compelled by.

“Fucking hell,” George mutters, knowing that if this continues for too much longer then he won’t be able to face the rest of the room. Panicked eyes flick from one side of the studio to the other, desperately trying to find a door to escape into. And when he does it’s like a miracle. Hands clutch onto Dream’s shirt, an eye roll following the pointing of fingers in the direction of the behind rooms. “In there, now.”

They move in tandem, Dream far too close for it to look platonic for the others around. And their intent must be obvious but no one intervenes, they all just let George drag Dream behind an unwelcoming door and slam it shut when their bodies disappear.

“We are in public,” George scolds as Dream pushes him back, letting the backs of his thighs hit a counter that can’t quite be made out in the dark.

Lips are on his neck, soft, open mouthed kisses trailing up George’s skin before he can process the very first touch. It’s intoxicating and fast and somehow it seems slightly freeing, with Dream staying close and never letting George fall too far into his mind

“So?” Dream questions, charming as always. “I’ve been wanting to kiss you all day.”

A feeble slap—no actual power behind it, just a light tap to the side of Dream’s face to tell him not

to get too smarmy. “You’re so fucking stupid.”

It’s all tongue and teeth, messy and urgent. And the fire that spreads through George’s chest is so uncontrollable that he’ll never be able to put it out. He lets his teeth scrape over Dream’s lower lip, taking everything that he can and pretending that he doesn’t have mercy until Dream takes that role instead, slipping a hand around the side of Dream’s neck just to tilt his head back and remind the other that he’s everywhere.

“No one else can have you like this,” Dream slurs, kissing and biting, and running red up the side of George’s neck. “They can all look but I’m the only person that gets to touch.”

George’s chuckle twists in the air, turning sharp and falling into the ends of a moan when Dream runs his hands up cold skin and tries to pry George’s cardigan from his body. The movements aren’t frantic but they’re rushed, George not even able to knock Dream’s head to one side to catch their lips together because the other is too preoccupied with marking him up to put George’s mouth to use as well.

There’s a smile on George’s lips when he’s touched, his back arching into the other’s hands while he’s held at both sides and kissed until there’s nothing to do other than sigh. “How long have you been dreaming of this?” He half jokes, stealing Dream’s eye with a coy glance.

“Ever since I saw you in vogue,” Dream answers honestly. A kiss to the corner of George’s mouth and a second directly on his lips. “Although, you’d be more suited to playboy like this.”

“You think I’d be a good bunny?” George laughs, humorous.

“The best,” Dream says. “They’d give you a two page spread, just so that they can photograph every part of you.”

At some point the words turn dark, shrouded in a hidden meaning that George can’t help but entertain.

“Every part?”

“Well not all of them,” Dream smiles. “Some places are just for me.”

Perhaps a dressing room isn’t the most romantic place to have sex, but George doesn’t particularly care, the only thing that matters to him is the fact that he’s here doing it with Dream.

Dream opens George up slowly, with a bottle of lube that George didn’t even know he carried and four fingers that he had insisted weren’t necessary (Dream had shushed him and told him that he didn’t want it to hurt). They kiss with hurried breaths, panting and panting as they make sure their foreheads are pressed together and George’s legs are pushed up in a position that won’t be too painful to hold, especially not when he needs to stand in front of a camera tomorrow and pretend he’s not limping when he walks.

When Dream pushes in, it’s slow. George can barely breathe and needs the other to cling onto while he’s guided through it all and stretched over the counter on his back, just to be stared at in vulnerability.

Dream makes sure that he’s ready. He starts off with an agonising pace and speeds up when he hears George’s pleas for more. It’s not ferocious, or animalistic, or like how George has had sex in the past. Instead it’s intimate, as sensual as it can be when they’re in public, on a dressing table.

George gasps with real innocence, and moans with sin. He lets his body be fucked and loves every

second of it, wishing that there was a way for Dream to get even closer to him while they share something that neither will forget. A slow motion leads to a faster one, and before George knows it he's close, spiralling down the rabbit hole while Dream follows in perfect tandem.

"I'm close," George gasps, reaching up to try and touch Dream in any way possible.

It doesn't have to be spoken because Dream understands. He takes George's hands in his own and presses a kiss to his knuckles, dusting them with pink desire while he thrusts into the others body and fucks him with little remorse.

"I'm close too," Dream mumbles.

The gap between them is closed before they reach their peak. Dream leans down and kisses George until he's breathless, stealing oxygen from feeble lungs and not understanding the effect that he has, and when they orgasm, they get there together—some stupid illusion of chivalry making Dream act as though he owes it to George to be the romantic that he deserves.

And when George comes down from his high, still drunk off of the feeling that Dream gives him—with tired bones and even more tired eyes—he doesn't feel numb. It's not perfect, and there's ways he knows he'll ruin it in the future, whether that's because he's self-destructing or Dream has decided he can't take the glamour that George's life holds.

But George has faith. He has dumb luck and a pretty face, and Dream has the exact same, alongside charm and a smile and lips that taste like homemade euphoria. He'll hold George through the bad and even though he's no good at expressing it, George will do the same for him, time and time again.

So he lets his legs shake, body fucked out and entire being tired. Dream is attentive. He helps George stay up and presses his head between the junction of George's neck and his jaw, holding the smallest of kisses against the skin to make sure the other knows that he's still there.

Outside, everyone will still be milling about, packing up their kits and putting everything away. They'll be completely oblivious to what lies behind the door that Dream and George disappeared into, hopefully it'll stay that way forever. Or at least until George finds his feet again, has the strength to get through college and stop doubting the fact that casting directors will want him for more than just his assets.

He almost feels guilty about the fact that Dream is doing it all for him, cleaning him up with a rag that George didn't even know he had. But there's no one forcing him here, he wants to be with George—likes him for reasons that George will never really comprehend.

"One day," Dream mumbles, quiet because the only person he needs to talk to is already hanging off of his every word. "I'll start my own magazine, just so I can put you on every cover."

"I didn't know that was something you'd be interested in," George breathes.

"I'm interested in anything you're a part of," Dream smiles. "I like you. A lot."

"I like you too."

And it's not love, but they're getting there.

One day it will be. And *one day* George will be tough enough to say it.

End Notes

comments / kudos are so so appreciated

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